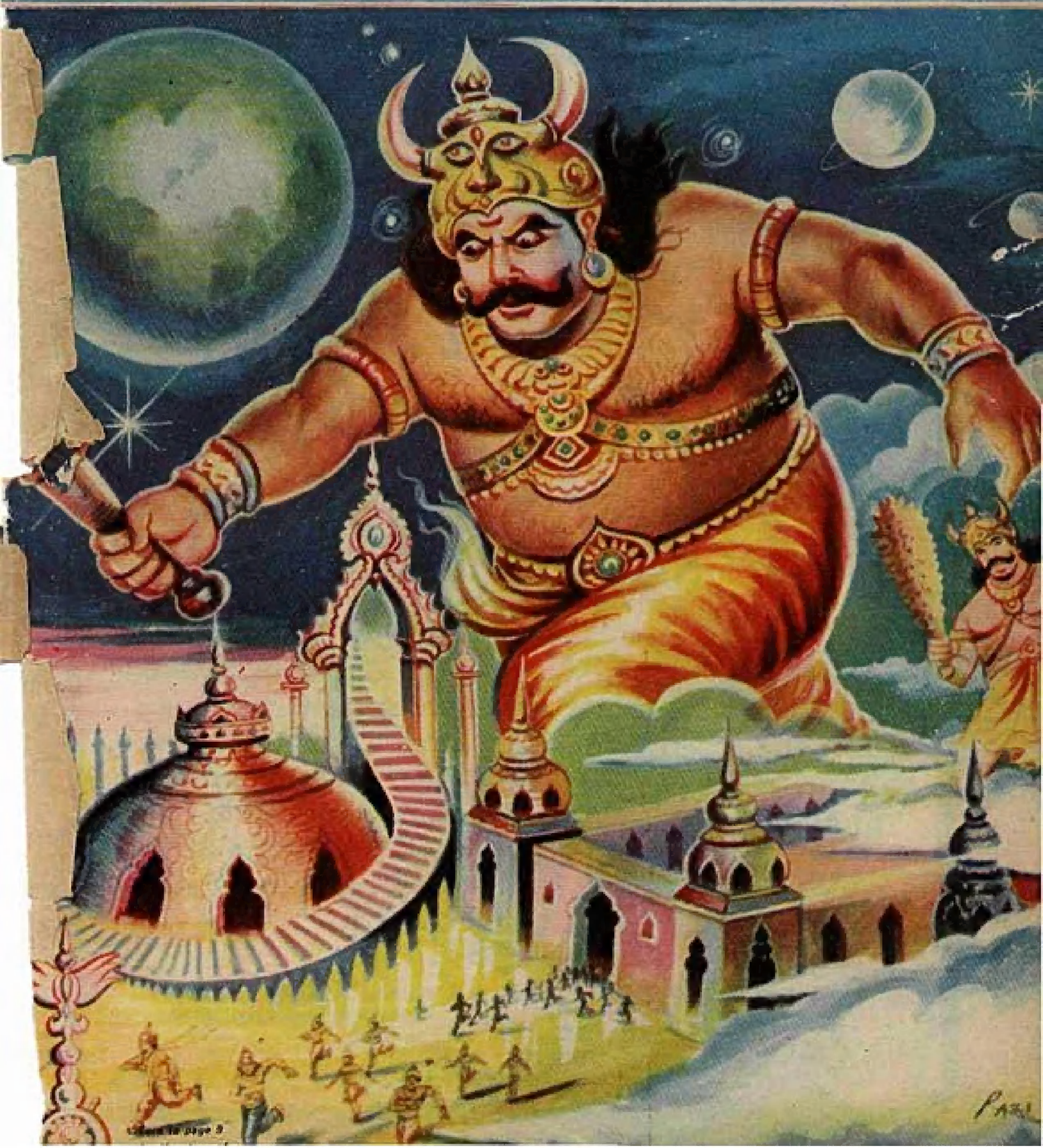


CHANDAMAMA

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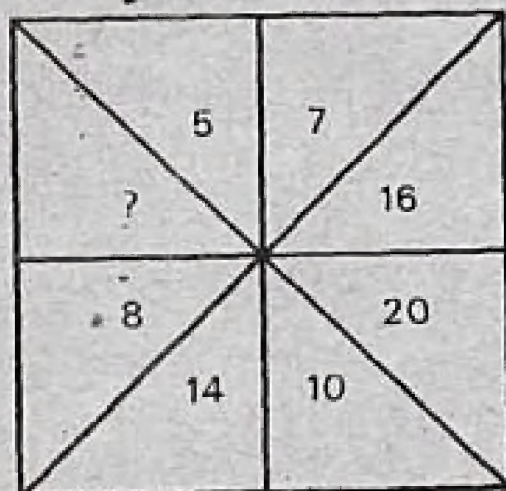


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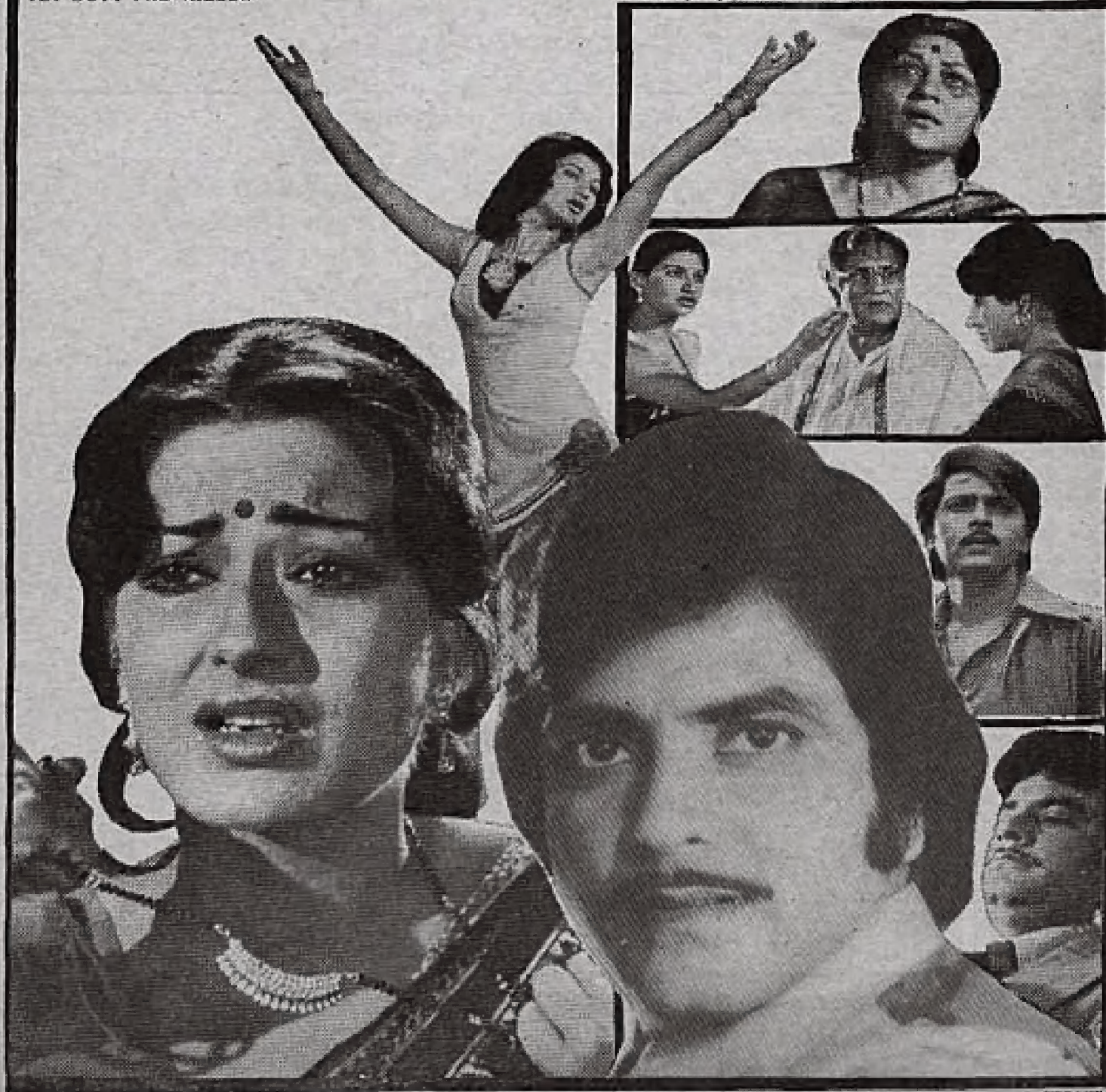
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CHANDAMAMA

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No. 4

Founder : CHAKRAPANI

A BUNCH OF EXCELLENT STORIES

The Buddha was one of the greatest spiritual teachers the world has known. But the soul that was born as Gautama and became famous as the Buddha, the Enlightened One, is believed to have been born again and again prior to that great incarnation. Each time he gained some valuable experience which, as the Buddha, he recollected and narrated to his disciples for their benefit.

These anecdotes of the Buddha's past lives are known as the **Jatakas**.

It is not possible to say how many of the **Jatakas** had been narrated by the Buddha himself. But there are 547 of them in all. Many might have been narrated by his disciples who attributed them to the Master. Maybe, some of the stories which had been told by the Buddha to drive home some points were imagined by the disciples to be reminiscences of his past lives.

The **Jataka** tales which are as old as the Buddhism, have had a great influence on the literature of the world. A few fables of Aesop are variations of the **Jataka** tales.

In this issue of your magazine, in the pages dedicated to "Legends and Parables of India", you will read a **Jataka** tale. We propose to give you more of them in the issues to come.



GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

श्रूयतां धर्मसर्वस्वं श्रुत्वा चैवावधार्यताम् ।
आत्मनः प्रतिकूलानि परेषां न समाचरेत् ॥

*Śrūyatām dharmasarvasvaṁ śrutvā caivāvadhāryatām
Ātmanah pratikūlāni pareṣāṁ na samācaret*

Listen to this essence of all the codes of religious conduct and stick to this:
Never do unto others what you won't like to be done unto you.

The Panchatantram

संक्षेपात् कथ्यते धर्मो जनाः किं विस्तरेण वः ।
परोपकारः पुण्याय पापाय परपीडनम् ॥

*Samkṣepāt kathyate dharmo janāḥ kiṁ vistareṇa vaḥ
Paropakārah puṇyāya pāpāya parapīḍanam*

Let me tell you in brief, for elaboration is unnecessary, that you gain true
religious merit by doing good to others and earn sin by harming the others.

The Panchatantram

सत्यं ब्रूयात् प्रियं ब्रूयात् न ब्रूयात् सत्यमप्रियम् ।
प्रियं च नानृतं ब्रूयादेष धर्मः सनातनः ॥

*Satyam brūyāt priyam brūyāt na brūyāt satyamapriyam
Priyam ca nānṛtaṁ brūyādeṣa dharmah sanātanaḥ*

Speak the truth, speak pleasantly, avoid speaking unpleasant truth. But do
not speak something which, though pleasant, is untrue. This code of conduct
is valid forever.

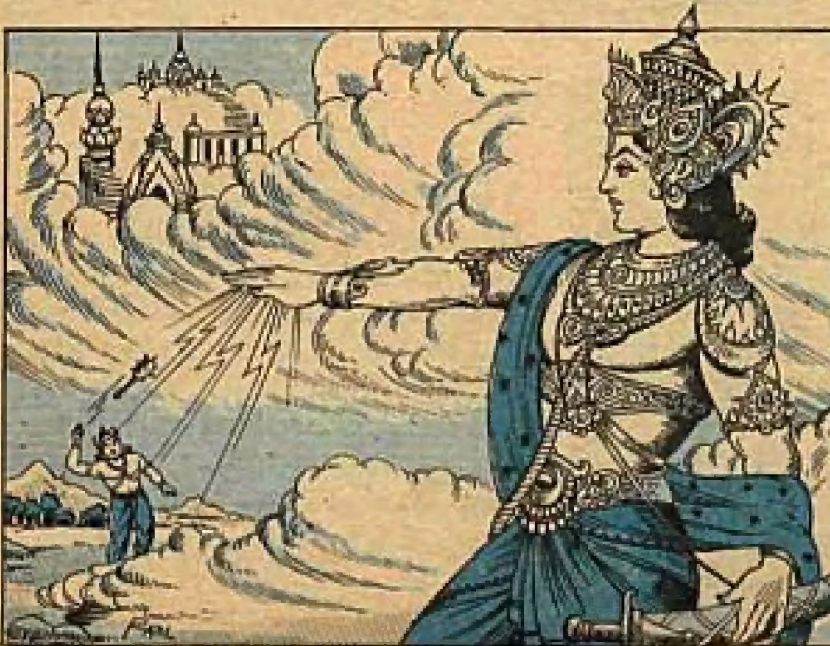
Samayochita Padyamalika

CRUSHING THE LUSTY DEMONS

Long long ago, when the demon, Mahishasura, grew ruthless and dangerous, as a response to the prayers of the gods and sages, the Divine Mother, as Durga, subdued him.



The sage Kashyapa had three sons, Shumbha, Nishumbha and Namuchi. According to their mother's name, which was Danu, they were known as *Danavas*. In fact, they were demons. Even while young, they terrorised people.

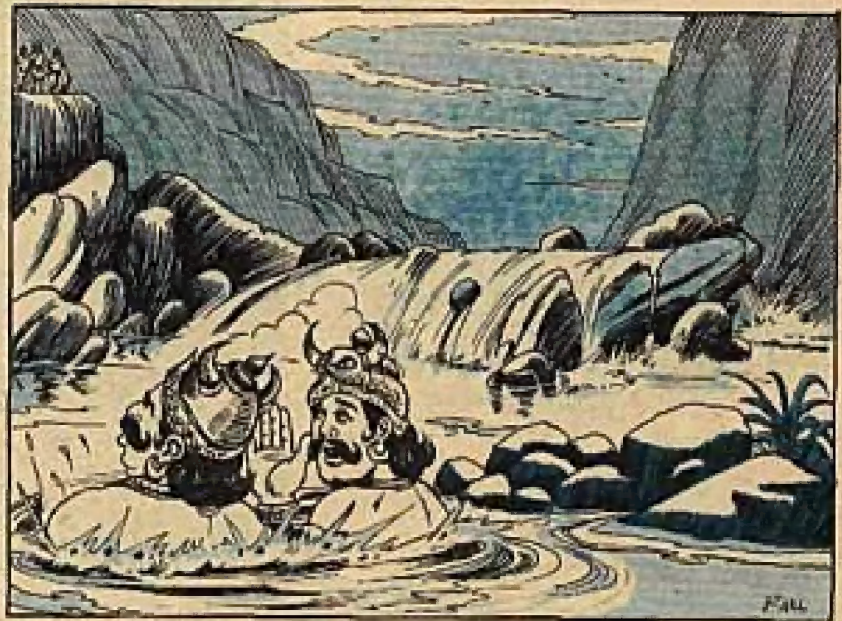


The youngest of the three, Namuchi, dared to climb to heaven and challenge Indra to a fight. Indra was surprised. But he attacked him with his thunder and destroyed him.



Shumbha and Nishumbha grew furious at the news of their brother's death. They attacked heaven and, after a fierce battle, banished the gods down to the earth. Heaven came under their occupation.

Thereafter Shumbha and Nishumbha looked for all the demon-lieutenants of Mahishasura. They met his minister, Raktavija, and found out his generals, Chanda and Munda, who were hiding in water.



Thus strengthened by able helpers, Shumbha and Nishumbha sent word to Durga through a messenger that she should marry one of them, as they were the most powerful beings. Durga replied that whoever can defeat her can marry her.

The demon-brothers sent Dhumralochan, their assistant, to capture Durga. As Dhumralochan and his soldiers approached the Goddess, She gave out a thunderous shout. The divine wrath that was in the shout resulted in a fire which licked away Dhumralochan and his party.



The demon-brothers then sent Chanda and Munda to capture the Goddess. Even they could not stand before Her for long. Both got killed.

By killing Chanda, Durga became known as *Chandi* or *Chandika*.

Next, the demon-brothers sent the terrible Raktavija. As the soldiers of the Goddess shot their arrows at him, he bled. But from each drop of his blood emerged a new demon. Thus numerous demons rushed towards the Goddess—their number increasing rapidly.



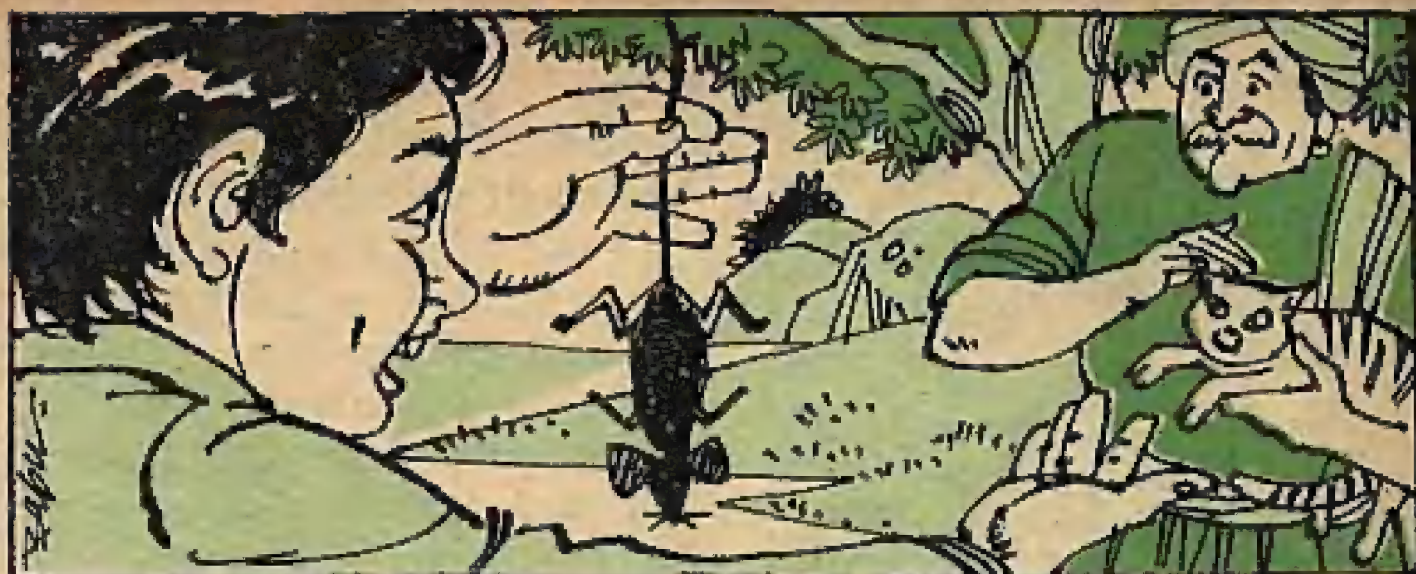


Durga brought an emanation out of Herself—Kali. In the twinkling of an eye, Kali took hold of the demon-horde, including Raktavija, and crushed them to death like ants.

At last Shumbha and Nishumbha came to fight with Durga. It was an awful battle. Ultimately, both the demons were killed, one after another.



With the death of Shumbha and Nishumbha, heaven returned to the possession of the gods. Peace was restored to the earth. Gods and sages expressed their gratitude to the Divine Mother.



LEGENDS AND PARABLES OF INDIA

FORTUNE FROM A DEAD RAT

This happened long long ago. The Buddha, in one of his previous lives, had been born as a citizen of Varanasi, the beautiful city, then ruled by King Brahmadutta.

Because of his wisdom and noble nature, the Buddha, in that incarnation, had been chosen as the leader of the citizens. It was he who represented the people in the king's court. He was popularly referred to as Shresthi—the Chief.

One day while Shresthi was passing through a locality, his companion stopped, looking at something that lay on the road.

“What is it?” asked the Chief.

“It is a useless thing. A dead rat!” replied the companion.

“Nothing is useless in a certain sense. A clever and lucky fellow can make a fortune even out of this dead rat,” said Shresthi.

Just then a young man who came of a noble family but who had become poor happened to pass by. He overheard what Shresthi said. He had great faith in Shresthi's wisdom. He picked up the dead rat by the tail and resumed walking. He was on his way to the next town in search of some means of livelihood.

On the long lonely road, he saw a traveller seated under a tree. The traveller had his pet cat with him. As his eyes fell on the dead rat carried by the



youth, he said, "Young man, I will be glad if you spare your rat for the sake of my hungry cat." The youth gave away the rat and the happy traveller gave him a paisa in return.

The youth bought an earthen jar with the paisa and filling it with cool water sat beside a road which led to the flower market. A group of *malis* who came from distant villages with flowers were thirsty. They drank the water served by the youth with great relish and each one presented him with a few flowers. He prepared half a dozen bouquets and carried them to a market at another end of the

town. He sold them at a good price.

With the little money he thus earned, he bought some jaggery. At night there was a strong cyclone which damaged hundreds of trees in the royal garden. The whole ground became messy with broken branches. The gardener did not know how to clear them.

The youth approached him and said that he can clear the garden of the broken branches if he would be allowed to take away the branches. The gardener gladly agreed to the condition.

The youth gathered a number of small boys who were playing in the streets and promised them lumps of jaggery if they helped him to clear the mess. The boys were too happy to carry the branches to a place directed by the youth.

The youth made bundles of wood out of the branches and waited there till a potter was attracted to the sight.

"Will you give me those bundles in exchange for a dozen pots?" he asked. The youth agreed to the deal. The potter happily carried the bundles away to use them as fire-wood for baking his pots.

The youth sold the pots in the market and received a fair price. Thereafter he raised a shed in a meadow and carried potfuls of water into it.

That was a meadow where grass grew fast. A number of people were at work in the meadow busy cutting grass. They were very happy when they got water to drink. They could work longer at a stretch. This went on for days.

"How are we going to repay our debt to you?" they asked him time and again.

"I shall ask you to help me when the need arises," the youth replied.

One day he heard that some

horse-traders were visiting the city with five hundred horses. That day he asked the grass-cutters to leave for him a part of the grass they cut. The grass-cutters obliged him generously.

He carried the grass to the outskirts of the town and heaped them beside a road by which the horse-traders were to come.

The traders were delighted to see the fresh grass. They wished to feed their horses properly so that the animals looked smarter before being led for sale. The youth sold the grass at a high price.

He now possessed over a hundred silver coins. He spent almost half of the amount and



bought a tent and a set of costly clothes for himself. A ship loaded with merchandise was approaching the port. He perched his tent in the port and met the ship's captain as soon as the ship was anchored.

"I wish to buy off all your goods," he told the captain.

From the manner and dress of the youth, the captain surmised that he was a seasoned merchant. For the captain the offer was a welcome proposal, for it would save him the botheration of having to sell his goods in parts to several merchants over a long time.

The captain promised to unload the ship at a certain price. The youth handed out fifty silver coins as a token of advance and said that his manager was on his way with the rest of the amount.

Next day other merchants came to meet the captain. They learnt that the whole merchandise had been booked by the youth. They were obliged to approach the youth. He sold them parts of the goods at considerable profit and paid up the captain's due in three days.

This transaction brought him a big profit. He thought that his luck was due to Shresthi's observation on the dead rat. Therefore he carried half of the profit to Shresthi.

Shresthi was amazed at the youth's enterprise and luck. "Such a boy is to be found rarely," he thought and he married his daughter to the youth.

After Shresthi's death, the youth succeeded to his property and position.

—From the *Buddha Jataka*



TWO WORTHY BROTHERS

There was a certain merchant who had two young sons. The merchant was clever, but his sons were quite opposite in nature.

One day the merchant heard that the landlord was dead. Thinking that it was an opportunity for finding favour with the landlord's son by lamenting his father's death, the merchant wanted to pay a visit to the landlord's house. But he suddenly fell sick and asked one of his sons to do the needful.

"How to express condolence?" asked the son.

"Just repeat the words which other people who must have gathered there would say," said the merchant.

The son, on arriving at the landlord's house, heard some people who had enmity with the landlord; whispering to each other, "Good that the rogue is dead!"

He walked over to the landlord's son and said, "Why are you so sad? Good that your father the rogue is dead!"

The landlord's son gave him a beating and he ran away.

"Now you go and try to appease the landlord's son," the merchant told his second son.

The second son walked up to the landlord's son and said, "Pardon my brother who is a fool. When you die, I shall come myself and lament your death in no uncertain terms!"

The landlord's son had to use his stick again.



The Prince

and the WIZARD

(In order to avenge his master's death, Badal enters the palace. He intends to kill King Bhuvam-singh. But his plan misfires. The palace guards give him a hot chase. Surprised by the noise, Princess Pratiba opens her room. Badal enters the room and closes the door. The princess, who had reasons to feel fascinated by Badal is not sure if the young man had not taken the great risk for the sake of meeting her. She lets him slip away. The wizard who watches the events has a brief talk with Ramu Who promises to meet him later, along with Badal.)

10

Full throated laughter, resounding applause and lusty shouts of appreciation filled the royal court. The wizard, dressed in a colourful robe, was presenting a gala performance.

Never had the royalty or the courtiers or the nobility seen such breath-taking miracles. Who could have dreamt that out of the court astrologer's beard would emerge a live rabbit? Who could have thought of Samser's waist-belt changing into a snake to his great horror and again the snake changing into the belt, to his great relief? And didn't the wizard change the *luddo* which the minister held in his grip into a frog?

Each of his tricks was follo-

wed by a hurrah. Indeed, the show brought a great relief to the inmates of the palace after the tension they had experienced at night. In fact, many had forgotten all about the audacious stranger who had trespassed into the palace and who, despite a hot chase, had succeeded in giving everybody the slip.

The wizard declared his show over amidst a final thunderous applause. The king at once handed out to him a silken bag bursting with mohurs. The wizard bowed to the king thrice and took leave of him, followed by his weird-looking disciple.

But as soon as the hullabaloo was over, the king grew pensive. He knew that the episode of the night had become the gossip of

the town. That his guards had failed to notice someone stealthily entering the palace could itself cause a great loss of prestige. Over and above that, the culprit had made good his escape, defying all attempts at capturing him. To the people it should appear that the king's palace was invincible. Once that impression was gone, the people's faith in the king's capacity to protect the kingdom would develop cracks.

Samser was found busy again in taking the palace guards to task. He was trying to extract from them a description of the trespasser's face. But nobody seemed to have been able to see it. Nevertheless, to Samser's repeated question, they were

obliged to give imaginary answers.

One said that the trespasser's face was as dark as the night itself and that his eyes flashed like Will-o-the wisp! Another fellow added that the stranger once bared his teeth and they looked as sharp as spikes.

One asserted that the fellow appeared and disappeared at will!

"Hm!" Samser nodded wisely to these reports and by evening he met the king and proudly announced that he had found out who the trespasser was.

"Is that so? That is clever of you!" said the king, truly hopeful for a moment.

"The trespasser was no human being, but a vampire!"





declared Samser, trying to sound wise. "That explains why we could not catch him."

The king's enthusiasm was gone. He was visibly irritated.

"That only explains how foolish we are!" he murmured and showed no further curiosity. Samser failed to understand why such a remarkable report made by him should meet with such cool reception from the king. He went away, gloomy as an owl.

Late in the afternoon the king was closeted with his ministers for a long time. All of them agreed that it had been a serious matter and the trespasser was

certainly somebody to reckon with. He could not have been an ordinary burglar, but a man with some strong motive. It was decided to station more guards in and around the palace. Some of them were to keep vigil throughout the night through the small openings of the tall turrets.

That night, the king remained awake for a long time, tossing on his bed. At last, when sleep came to him, it was past midnight.

All was quiet. Suddenly the queen gave out a shriek. The king woke up and rushed to her bedside. She had sat up, looking almost wild.

"Some fearful dream, is it?" the king queried affectionately.

The queen seemed to have lost her power of speech.

"Fearful and evil," she said at last and narrated her dream:

She and her daughter, Princess Pratiba, were enjoying a stroll in their garden. It was evening. In a remote corner of the garden they saw a wall with an old door.

"What is there on the other side of this wall, mother?" asked the princess.

"How do I know? I do not remember even having seen this

wall ever!" replied the queen.

"Is that not strange? This area is a part of our garden and we have never come here! Let us cross over to the other side and see what is there," said the princess. Before the queen had given her opinion, the princess pushed the door open.

Once they had crossed the door, the door shut by itself. They were bewildered to find themselves in an altogether alien world. There was something eerie in the atmosphere. They wanted to retreat into the garden, but the door would not open. All around them were snow-clad hills, without the slightest sign of life. They stood shivering in the cold breeze, not knowing what to do.

Suddenly, a terrible figure emerged from behind a hill. Although it had a human form, it looked and smiled like a ghastly ghoul. Bursting into a laughter, the fellow grabbed the hand of the princess with its claw-like fingers and began to run away. The princess cried, but was dragged away.

The queen shrieked in horror. Her own shriek woke her up. She took time to come back to her senses.



The queen was still shivering when she finished narrating her dream. She said that the face of the kidnapper seemed rather familiar to her, although she could not remember where she had seen the face—if at all.

"A dream is a dream. Forget it," said the king. But he was feeling uneasy himself. A moment later, he said, "I will go down into the shrine and bring the diamond talisman for you. That will not only give you strength, but also will protect us from the effects of any evil eye."

The king went out. He passed the corridor adjoining the suite

of the princess. All was quiet. The king stopped for a moment and was about to call the princess. But, on second thought, he left her undisturbed.

He then hurtled downstairs. A couple of palace-guards, who were now more alert in their vigil than ever, bowed to him and followed him.

The king opened the shrine and lighted the lamp. In front of the deity was kept the diamond talisman. It was in the form of a pendant with a gold chain attached to it. The king wore it when he went to face any grave situation, like a battle or a mutiny. It was a talisman of great antiquity and had come

down from the old dynasty to the new one. It was believed to have occult powers to protect its possessor.

But a shock of great magnitude awaited the king. The talisman had disappeared from its place!

The king looked for it in all possible places inside the shrine, but in vain. He felt an instant urge to cry out, or to shout out to the guards his order to raise an alarm. But, he decided to keep the ominous finding to himself and check spreading any panic.

He was sweating. He knelt down before the deity and prayed for the Lord's protection.

Contd.



*The Builders of
India's Heritage*

ANDAL

A hair in the garland meant for the Lord? Had someone worn the garland before it was brought to the temple? How could Vishnuchitta, of all persons, bring such a garland?

The priest stood surprised, the garland in hand. He did not offer the garland to the deity—the image of Vishnu in the temple at Srivalliputhur, not very far from the city of Madurai. A little later, when Vishnuchitta visited the temple, the priest showed him the rejected garland—the hair, which

seemed to be a woman's, still entwined in the flowers.

Vishnuchitta was shocked. The garland had been made by himself with flowers picked from his own garden. None but Goda, his foster daughter, had seen or touched the garland before he carried it to the temple. Had the girl then put on the garland herself, while it was in her charge?

The pensive Vishnuchitta threw the garland away. Next day, he secretly observed the conduct of Goda. As he had



suspected, Goda put the garland kept for the deity around her own neck and beheld her own image in a mirror. A smile made her face radiant. She was murmuring some words to herself.

The girl's conduct appeared strange to Vishnuchitta. Little did he know the girl's mind. It is not any human vanity that had prompted her action. She was the divine bride—wedded to Vishnu. She had every right to put on the garland which was meant for her consort.

And should she not put on the garland and see whether she looked worthy of her position as the divine bride or not?

"What is this, my daughter?

You knew very well that the garland was to be carried to the Lord." How did you violate its sanctity?" asked Vishnuchitta, rather angry.

The girl looked back, equally shocked at the sudden accusation. But she had no answer. Her smile changed into sadness as her annoyed father threw the garland away.

But Vishnuchitta was no ordinary father. True to his name, which meant one whose mind rested in Vishnu, he was a devotee par excellence, a poet and a saint, one of the great *Alvars*. At night he saw the deity in a dream:

"Why was I deprived of my garland today?" asked the deity.



"Lord! the garland became unworthy of your use because my ignorant daughter used it first," said Vishnuchitta.

The deity smiled. "Don't you know, my devotee, that because she wears the garlands first, they become sweeter and dearer to me?" the deity asked and the dream ended.

Vishnuchitta woke up. He now realised who the daughter was. Indeed, she had come to him in an unusual manner. One fine morning he had found her—an infant—in a sacred *Tulsi* bush. She had been, from the very budding of her senses, interested only in Vishnu. She worshipped Him in her childish way, mumbled out prayers which were her own compositions and hardly showed any interest in anything else.

She had emerged from the earth, like Mother Sita. Maybe, his little 'Goda' was none other than an emanation of Bhudevi or Shridevi.

In the morning Vishnuchitta told her daughter about the dream. She only smiled. From that time onward Vishnuchitta called her Andal, 'Redeemer of the World'.

Andal began writing charming verses of devotion for her



Lord. She saw herself as a bride dedicated to Him and her lyrics recorded her urge to be united with Him, and her pangs at her separation from Him. In moving words, she also sang His glory.

As she grew up—and she grew up to be a beautiful young lady—proposals galore for her marriage reached Vishnuchitta. Vishnuchitta asked her for her consent. She did not hesitate for a moment. She declared that she was already Vishnu's bride. If her father was interested in rituals, he can arrange for her formal marriage with Him!

But Vishnu was worshipped in several forms. With which idol of Vishnu would she like to get married?—asked Vishnu-chitta.

“With Lord Ranganatha of Srirangam,” was Andal’s reply.

Any proposal about a human bride’s formal marriage with a deity was expected to arouse ridicule. But nothing of that sort happened with Andal’s marriage proposal. Vishnu-chitta was widely respected as a saint. Andal too had won wide admiration from the Vaishnavas as a great soul, a true devotee of Lord. People concerned understood that the proposed marriage had some mystic meaning.

The priests of Lord Ranga-

natha, strangely indeed, were prepared to welcome Andal as their Lord’s bride. In a regular bridal procession, Andal was carried, seated in a palanquin, from her home town to Srirangam.

She entered the temple and ran into the deity’s abode. No more was she seen. It is said that she merged with the deity and her physical form disappeared.

This happened twelve hundred years ago. Till today, Andal’s compositions are fondly sung by the Tamil Vaishnavas. Her verses have inspired devotion in innumerable hearts, over the centuries. She is the only woman among the twelve Alwars of the South.



*New Tales of King Vikram,
and the Vampire*

A STRANGE SILENCE

Dark was the night and fearful the atmosphere. Jackals howled and flashes of lightning revealed fearful faces. At intervals was heard weird laughter.

But King Vikram swerved not in his mission. He brought the corpse down from the desolate tree and began walking through the cremation ground.

Suddenly the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, I hope, you are doing nothing at the instance of any wicked fellow. If you do that you will endanger yourself. Let me explain my observation through an instance."

The vampire went on: This happened long ago. A hermit who was always on the move, came to camp in the premises of a temple near a city. Soon the local people got the impression that he was a great soul. They met him with various prayers. The hermit gave them blessings or, in few words, told them





the solutions to their problems.

One night a fellow bowed down to him and said, "O great soul, I desire to undertake a profitable work tonight. Please tell me the auspicious hour. I promise to give you a part of my gain."

The hermit told him the time when he should do his work. The fellow went away, happy.

He was in fact a burglar. That night he burgled a wealthy merchant's house. He carried a part of his booty to the hermit. In the morning the hermit distributed the wealth among the poor.

A few days passed. The burglar met the hermit again and

prayed to know the time when he should launch his operation in order to be fully successful. The hermit gave him the time and he went away satisfied.

That night the burglar crept into the king's palace and decamped with a bagful of gold mohurs. He placed a handful of it before the hermit.

In the morning the hermit made a gift of the mohurs to a group of beggars. Before long news reached the king that some beggars were busy changing gold mohurs in the bazaar! They were arrested. Being questioned, they said that they had received the mohurs from the hermit. The hermit was summoned to the court.

"Did you distribute gold mohurs among beggars?" the king asked him.

The hermit kept silent.

"It seems you are a burglar or a burglar's accomplice in the guise of a hermit!" observed the king.

Even then the hermit kept silent. Annoyed, the king ordered him to be put to death. The sentence was carried out.

The vampire in a challenging tone, asked, "O King, was it not a grave injustice to execute the hermit? How could the

king pass such an order? But why on earth did the hermit keep silent? Was it because he got shares of the burglar's booty? Answer me if you can. But if you keep mum despite knowing the true answers, your head would roll off your shoulders!"

Spoke out King Vikram at once: The king and the hermit were poles apart in their attitudes to things. The hermit who knew that each man was a mixture of good and bad qualities, never bothered to inquire into the personal conduct of the people who sought his blessings. In a general way, he was compassionate to all. He was no social reformer. The very compassion which led him to distribute all he received among the poor, also led him to answer the burglar's question. His mind did not take into account the

social laws and norms. Had he wished, he could have known, through meditation, what was the burglar's motive. But he did not care to do that.

"If he did not answer the king's questions, that too was because he did not care to do so. He was not afraid of death either. Hence he felt no inspiration to defend himself.

"The king's mind worked at another level. He was the guardian of the society and defender of its laws. He had to judge one's conduct from the social point of view and apply to one the laws by which the society runs. Thus, as the hermit's conduct was natural to the hermit, the king's was natural to the king."

As soon as the king concluded his answer the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.



In days gone by there was a nobleman named Hatim belonging to the tribe of Tay. His generosity had become a legend. He refused nothing to his guests.

When he died, his relatives buried him on a hilltop. Behind the tomb was a huge rock. His admirers cut fine sculpture of a few maidens out of that rock. They were shown to stand with dishevelled hair, as if mourning Hatim's death.

As days passed, travellers who spent their nights at the foot of that hill narrated a strange experience. They heard the lament of the stone girls at the dead of night. Nobody heard any sound in daytime.

One day a certain king happened to camp below the hill. At night, when all was quiet, and he was about to retire into his tent, he heard the weird lamentations coming from the hilltop.

Surprised, he asked his bodyguards, "What is this noise? Who dwells on the hill?"

"No living being dwells on the

hill. But there is situated the tomb of the generous Hatim, guarded by a few female statues. The figures come to life at night and lament Hatim's death!" informed a member of the king's retinue.

"Very well," said the king and he entered his tent. Before falling asleep, he addressed the spirit of Hatim and said, "I have heard much about your charity and generosity. Well, here we are, your guests. Shouldn't you entertain us?"



He fell asleep thereafter. In his dream he saw Hatim's spirit advancing towards him. Said the spirit, "You invoked my sense of hospitality. But I have nothing with me now. However, I shall kill your own camel so that you can cook its flesh for your food."

The king woke up. Next moment he heard the cries of his camel. The animal was writhing in pain.

The king ordered his men to stab it to death, for he knew that it will die even otherwise.

In the morning the king and his party set out on their journey. The king was still brooding over the strange way in which Hatim showed his hospi-

talities when a young man met him and greeted him. The young man was dragging a nice camel with him.

"Who are you?" asked the king.

"I am Hatim's son, my lord. My father appeared to me last night and said that he had been obliged to kill your own camel in order to show you his hospitality. He directed me to make good your loss. Here is a camel for you. Please take it for the one killed," said the young man as he handed over the animal to the king's man.

The king who had heard so much about Hatim's generosity in life, was now amazed at his generosity even after death!





A TRIAL

In the city of Kanchinagar lived Dhanagupta, the well-known merchant. He traded in jewelry and traded mostly with lands beyond the sea.

Dhanagupta was highly respected by the trading community. He was honest and helpful to all.

Padmavati was his only child. She had lost her mother when an infant. Naturally Dhanagupta bestowed all his care and love on the sweet little girl. He planned to give her in marriage with some wealthy merchant's son.

But Padmavati was in love with a youth named Vidyavrata. When Dhanagupta started looking for a bridegroom,

Padmavati asked Vidyavrata to meet him and propose marriage with her.

Vidyavrata, though he felt extremely shy, made bold to inform the merchant that he and Padmavati would like to marry.

This was a bolt from the blue for Dhanagupta. He hurried in and asked his daughter about it.

"Father! What Vidyavrata says is true!" confessed Padmavati.

Dhanagupta was in a quandary. How can he agree to the proposal when he had hardly any knowledge of the young man's nature? How can he say "No" to his dear daughter

either?

"Vidyavrata! I request you to stay with me for two or three days. I am expecting a friend. I should consult him before taking a decision," he told the young man. Vidyavrata agreed.

Three days passed. Instead of the friend, came the terrible news that Dhanagupta's ship, loaded with jewellery, had sunk!

"I am a pauper now!" muttered Dhanagupta, on the verge of tears.

The news of his misfortune spread in the city. Those to whom he owed money on different accounts thronged around him for realising their dues.

So many came to show him sympathy. But nobody came forward any offer to provide him with fresh capital to begin his business anew. Vidyavrata

silently observed the situation. Several times he tried to tell Dhanagupta something, but checked himself.

"I have no other go than to sell my house and liquidate those loans. I have to take shelter on the roadside!" he cried out.

Vidyavrata approached him and said in a tender voice, "Sir! Although I do not possess a palatial house like yours, my house is good enough to provide you with shelter. I lost my father years ago. I shall be delighted if you would care to look upon my house as yours!"

Dhanagupta's expression changed suddenly. "Bravo!" he shouted. "No calamity has befallen me. I just wanted to see whether you desired to marry my daughter or my wealth. You have emerged victorious in the trial."





A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

There was a time when the Indian fairies paid occasional trips to Greece!

And this is what happened when the fairies, led by their king and queen, were camping in a forest near Athens:

Hermia, an Athenian beauty, is asked by her father to marry Demetrius. But she would not, for she loves Lysander. But flouting her father's order might bring her death. Naturally, she and her lover decide to flee Athens. First they intend meeting in the forest.

Demetrius who earlier loved Helena is still loved by her. Hermia and Helena are friends. Hermia confides her plan to Helena. Helena, in order to please Demetrius, reveals the plan to him. The jealous Demetrius follows the lovers into the forest. And he is followed by the jealous Helena!

In the forest, the fairy king, Oberon, had a quarrel with his

queen, Titania. Desiring to embarrass her, he asks his goblin-servant, Puck, to fetch a certain magic flower. If the juice of this flower is put in someone's eyes, he or she will fall in love with whomsoever he or she happens to see after opening the eyes.

When Demetrius finds that Helena has followed him, he rebukes her. Oberon takes pity on Helena and asks Puck to put the magic juice in Demetrius's eyes so that he will love Helena when he sees her after waking up.

By mistake, Puck puts the magic juice into the sleeping Lysander's eyes. On waking up Lysander who really loved Hermia, sees Helena, and expresses love to her forthwith! She feels offended. Puck realises his mistake and puts the juice into Demetrius's eyes. He too sees Helena and makes loves to her.

The two young men are on the verge of fighting!

In the meanwhile Oberon has put the juice in his queen's eyes. It so happened that a

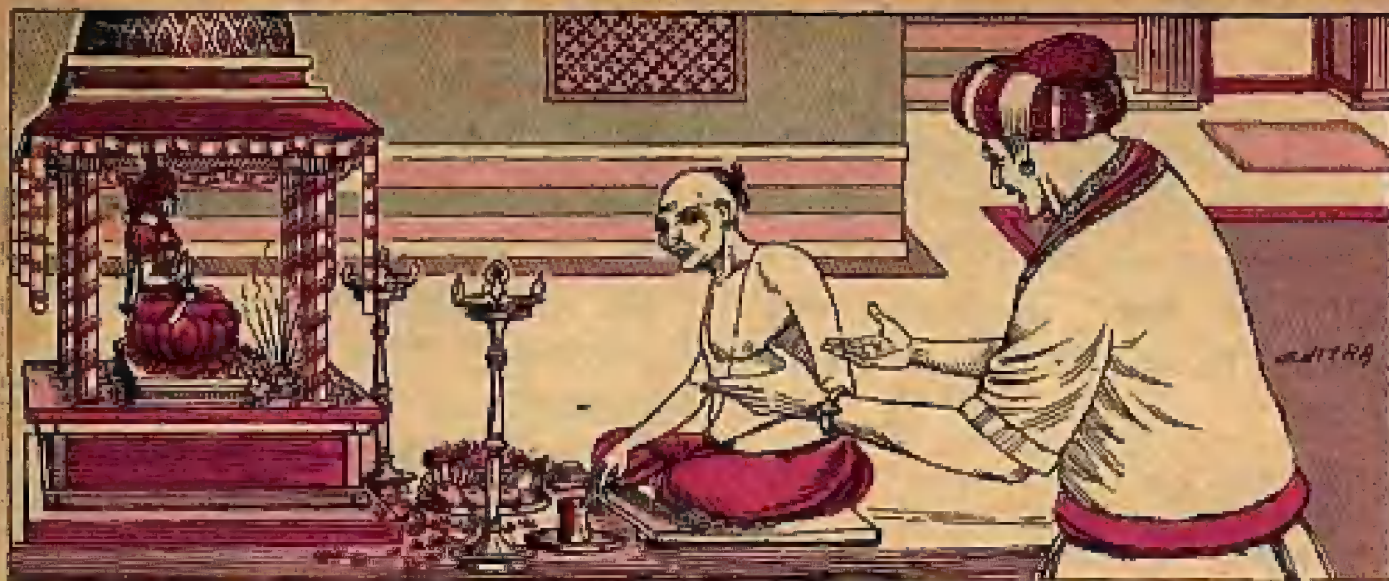
troupe of players have come to the forest for rehearsing a play which they intend to present on the occasion of their Duke's marriage. One of them, Nick Bottom, is a fool. The mischievous Puck, just for fun, puts an ass's head on Bottom's shoulders. As luck would have it, the fairy-queen sees that monster and falls in love with him and strokes his "amiable cheeks" and praises his "fair large ears"!

However, after a while Oberon removes the spell from his queen's eyes. Bottom's original head is restored to him. Thereafter the confused lovers too are put to sleep under a deep fog and the charm is removed from them. The Duke and his bride and their party are in the forest for hunting. Their noise wakes up the youths.

With the charm gone, Lysander loves Hermia again. Demetrius's love for Helena is revived too. The Duke, in his jolly mood, not only encourages the lovers, but also arranges for their weddings to take place along with his!

This is yet another popular play of Shakespeare.





THE GOOD DISCIPLE!

The kings of Shobhnagar had their family deity in a temple that was inside the palace. Raghu Bhatta was the priest.

Raghu Bhatta commanded great respect. Apart from being the priest, he was a trusted adviser to the king.

Raghu Bhatta retired from the king's service at the age of ninety. His nephew, Ballav, took over as the priest. Raghu Bhatta, however, did not lose his interest in the matters of the court. Ballav reported to him, regularly, all that took place in the court and the kingdom.

The king died all on a sudden, leaving two sons behind. On his death bed, the king had ordered that the princes, Arjun

and Subal, should live separately and rule the kingdom from two different towns, Sundarpur and Vilasgarh. But the king had not said who should live where.

"Both the princes desire to live here—at Sundarpur," Ballav reported to Raghu Bhatta.

Raghu Bhatta looked pensive. Sundarpur was the capital of the kingdom and it was close to the capitals of the neighbouring kingdoms. Vilasgarh was situated in that part of the kingdom which was sparsely populated. Raghu Bhatta knew the nature of the two princes. Arjun, the older of the two, was intelligent and sober. Subal was haughty and foolish. Raghu Bhatta

wanted Arjun to remain at Sundarpur.

Next day Raghu Bhatta paid a visit to the court. The courtiers stood up, showing respect to the venerable old man. Raghu Bhatta wished them well and straightway entered the cabin where the two princes sat, discussing their problems.

They bowed to the priest.

"I heard that you are to rule the land from two different places. I deemed it my duty to bless you," said Raghu Bhatta.

"The problem is, we cannot decide who will be here and who should proceed to Vilasgarh. Can you solve the

problem?" asked the princes.

"How can I? Haven't I retired from the affairs of the state?" said Raghu Bhatta.

"Even then be pleased to decide this case for us!" the princes pleaded with him.

"Very well, if you insist. I remember a story. Once there was a rishi who had two disciples. After twelve years of their stay in the ashram, they were to leave for their homes. They sought the rishi's blessings. The rishi gave a pinch of ash to each. First one immediately swallowed it. The second one threw it away. In course of time the first one grew famous as a



scholar. The second one went on criticising his master and came to nothing. I hope, none of you will criticise me for any of my actions," said Raghu Bhatta.

"Never. You decide and we accept your decision," promised the princes.

In the evening Raghu Bhatta sent a private message to Arjun that he need not behave like the good disciple of the story!

Next day Raghu Bhatta met the princes and held out two small pieces of paper. "Pick up any one you like," he said.

Subal picked up one and immediately swallowed it, like the good disciple of the story.

"I had written the names of the two towns separately on the two papers. One who picked up the paper with the name of Sundarpur written on it, was

to remain here. One who picked up Vilasgarh, was to go there," Raghu Bhatta explained.

"But Subal swallowed up his paper before reading it!" observed Arjun.

"So what? Let us see what is written on your paper. That will make it clear what was written on mine!" suggested Subal.

Arjun unfolded his paper. Sundarpur was the word written on it.

Subal left for Vilasgarh without a word more.

The priest had written the same word on both the papers so that whichever piece was picked up by Arjun will result in his staying at Sundarpur. So far as Subal was concerned, the experienced priest knew that he will swallow it up after the good disciple of the story!



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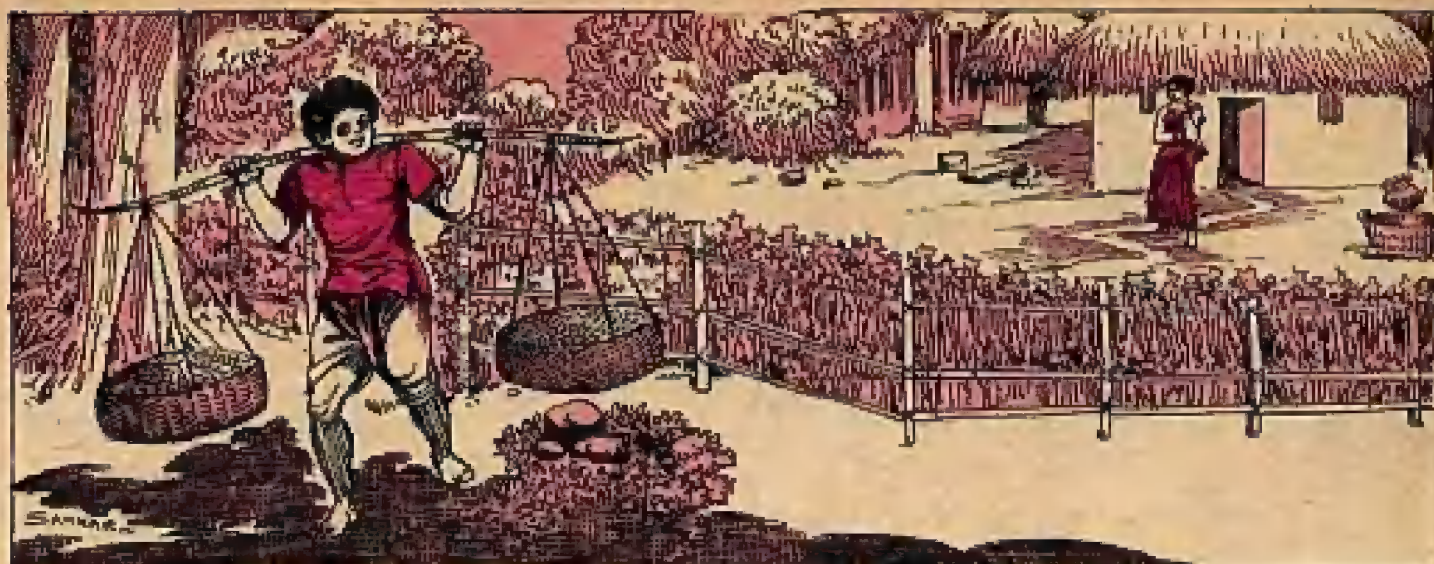
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The Orphan and The Tyrant

This happened nearly a hundred years ago, but if you visit the village Kushigarh, you are still likely to hear this story:

Kishan was a poor orphan. He lived in a hut with his grandmother. He laboured in the fields of other villagers and his grandmother worked in a few households. Thus they earned their livelihood.

Kishan, however, was ambitious. He often dreamt of a better living. He thought that if he went to the town, he can find some avenue to earn better. But he did not dare to step into an uncertain future.

One season their cashew tree yielded a good deal of nuts.

Kishan knew that cashew-nuts here sold at a high price in the town. One morning he carried them in two baskets to the town, with much hope.

He was passing through the main road of the town, calling the people's attention to his ware. He was heard by the zamindar who was quite fond of cashew nuts.

The landlord's watchman summoned Kishan into the mansion. The zamindar examined the nuts and found them to be of very good quality.

"Leave all here," ordered the zamindar and he handed out a small coin to Kishan.

"You must pay me a rupee



if you wish to buy all my cashew-nuts," said Kishan.

The zamindar got furious. "Don't you know," he shouted, "who am I? How dare you bargain with me? I decide the price of the goods I buy!"

The threat did not work with Kishan. He got ready to leave with his two baskets.

"Take hold of this audacious lad and give him a thrashing," shouted the zamindar. At once one of his servants tore off Kishan's shirt and began to lash him. The cashew-nut baskets were carried into the zamindar's store.

"Leave me! Leave me!" cried

Kishan, but in vain. Then he counted the lashes which were planted on his back. They came to fifty.

While leaving he looked daggers at the zamindar who laughed.

Kishan met a fellow-villager and through him sent word to his grandmother that he would return home after a month. He took up a job in a timber merchant's godown and with his sincerity earned the employer's trust.

He continued in the merchant's service and visited his home once every month. He got the chance of knowing the different kinds of wood as he often accompanied the merchant's men into the forest.

Ten years passed. The zamindar was constructing a new house. A cart-load of timber had just arrived before his house. Kishan, as if while passing by, had a look at the timber and said, "Huzoor, don't use these pieces if you wish your house to last!"

Soon he won the zamindar's confidence by talking fluently on the different kinds of wood.

"I own a forest. Will you please accompany me and point out the trees which would yield

the best timber?" he asked.

"Gladly," said Kishan.

They were in the forest. Kishan pointed out the suitable trees and the zamindar's men kept busy felling them. Kishan led the zamindar into the interior of the forest. Then pointing at a stout tree, he said, "Huzoor, measure the bulk of this tree by putting your arms around it."

As soon as the happy zamindar put his arms around the tree and brought his palms together on the other side, Kishan slipped a loop and tied his wrists. Then he promptly bound the zamindar more tightly to the tree with a strong rope.

"Zamindar, do you remember depriving a poor village lad of something he had brought for selling in the town, and torturing him for no fault of his? I am that fellow, Kishan by name. You had whipped me fifty times. I had taken an oath to the effect that I will not rest until I had whipped you hundred and fifty times. But you have grown old. I should not whip you. Instead I will make you pay me as high a price as possible for my lost cashew-nuts," said Kishan as he took the zamindar's purse out of his pocket.

Kishan took to another path



and left the forest.

The zamindar stood there groaning. It was late in the night that he was found out by his men. He had caught high fever. He was carried home.

"Kishan! Kishan!!" the zamindar shouted in his sleep and woke up, this happened again and again! Nobody knew who this Kishan was.

His fever did not subside. The local physicians failed to cure him. Someone reported of a travelling physician camping in an inn. He was called.

The physician examined the zamindar and asked for a variety of things. All the attendants

went out to fetch them. Suddenly the physician came closer to the zamindar and said, "I am Kishan in disguise!" He then opened the zamindar's safe and took out whatever money was there and said, "This is not enough. I must meet you once more to realise the full value of my cashew-nuts!"

By the time the attendants returned Kishan was not to be seen.

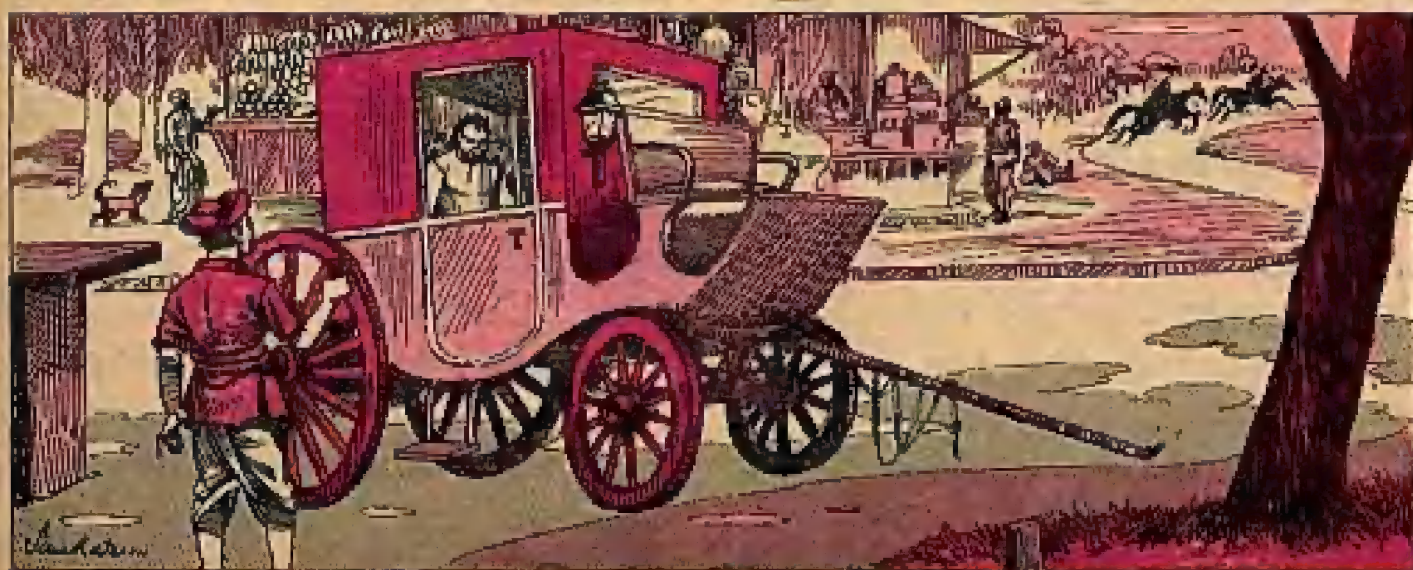
A year passed. The zamindar regularly visited a weekly market that was held on the outskirts of the town. One day Kishan saw a man leading his horse to the market for selling it.

"I shall buy your horse if you prove that it can run fast. A little later a man will come this way, seated in a horse-carriage. Just go near him and

whisper to him that you are Kishan. He will ask his coachman to capture you. You must gallop away. His man will chase you. Let us see if your horse can run faster than the fellow's old horse," said Kishan.

The man agreed. Everything happened as anticipated by Kishan. As soon as the zamindar's coachman detached the horse from the carriage and rode away pursuing the horse-trader, Kishan went closer to the carriage and announced to the zamindar, "I am real Kishan. He then took away the zamindar's purse and said, "Now I am satisfied. I need not meet you again."

In course of time Kishan became a wealthy and well-known man at Kushigarh. People still speak of his charity and compassion.





Rama's rule ensured happiness to all. No subject of Ayodhya, however mean be his status, was deprived of Rama's attention.

Days passed in peace. There was plenty to eat in the land. The monsoon came on time. The seasons came and went according to the laws of nature.

The people had enough time to devote to their spiritual well being. Artists, scholars, musicians and teachers were honoured. There was no crime, no violence. There were no beggars in the Kingdom.

Once, at midnight, a dog began barking furiously in front of the palace. Rama at once understood that the animal had some grievance. He came out to meet it before anybody had

scared it away.

The dog was bleeding. Rama sat down and patted it on the back. It calmed down and said, "My lord, a young man thrashed me for no fault of mine. Be pleased to appoint the fellow as the administrator of a temple!"

"Why do you wish your tormentor to be rewarded with such a position?" asked Rama, surprised.

"My lord, I am not wishing him well. I was a temple administrator in my previous life. If I am reborn as a dog, it is because I used to misappropriate the offerings which the devotees placed before the deity. The fellow who beat me is wicked indeed. If he is given



the charge of a temple, he will surely sin by stealing from the offerings and be reborn as a dog. However, my lord, your divine touch has lifted me high above any ill-feeling towards anybody. I am going to be free from a dog's life," said the dog and soon he died. Its tormentor was caught; but he repented for his misdeed and became a better man.

One day Yama, the God of Death, met Rama, in the guise of a Brahmin. He said, "O King, I desire to talk to you in absolute privacy. Whosoever will enter the chamber while I am closeted with you ought to

be punished with death."

Rama agreed to the condition. He asked Lakshmana to guard the entrance of the consultation chamber.

Said Yama, "O Rama, you are an incarnation of Vishnu. But it is time for your Avatarhood to come to an end. Sita, as Lakshmi, is waiting for your return at her father's abode in the Ocean of Milk. Prepare to leave the world."

Hardly had Yama ended his message when Durvasa, the sage, appeared before Lakshmana and wanted to push in. As Lakshmana tried to check him, he roared, "I must meet Rama forthwith. If you stop me, my curse will destroy the entire royal family!"

Lakshmana preferred his own death to the death of the entire family. He entered the chamber to announce Durvasa's arrival. Yama disappeared instantly.

According to the condition agreed upon, Rama had to announce death penalty for Lakshmana. His ministers quoted from scriptures and convinced Rama that death and exile amounted to the same thing and hence the condition would be fulfilled if Lakshmana

was exiled.

Lakshmana quietly left Ayodhya and entered the river Saryu. He sat in meditation and left his body which the river bore away.

Rama called Bharata and Shatrughna and asked them to arrange for the coronation of Lava and Kusha. Soon the city of Ayodhya went festive. Numerous gifts were bestowed on the citizens.

The coronation took place under great rejoicing.

One day Rama told Hanuman, "For long I have ruled the kingdom. It is time I retire. I leave Lava and Kusha in your charge. You have to protect them as well as the kingdom."

On an auspicious day Rama set out for the river Saryu. Reciting the Vedas, the Brahmins followed him. Bharata held an umbrella over his head while Shatrughna fanned him. Hanuman, looking remorseful, walked behind them.

The people of Ayodhya joined the procession although they hardly knew the purpose of Rama going towards the Saryu.

Soon they reached the river-bank. Bharata blew the conch-shell as soon as Rama's feet touched the water. Shatrughna



threw flowers on him. The priests chanted the sacred hymns. Musicians played on sublime notes.

Bharata and Shatrughna flanked Rama and descended into the river, keeping steps with him.

From the waters Rama looked back and asked the gathering to disperse peacefully. He wished them happiness.

The people looked on, quite bewildered. Hanuman who stood beside Lava and Kusha suddenly cried out, "O Ramachandra, kindly wait a while. Let me join you, for without you life is unbearable for me."

"Hanuman! Don't forget that



Shatrughna turned into *Shankha* and *Chakra*—the Conch and the Wheel in the hands of Vishnu.

* * *

One day Hanuman found Lava and Kusha pining for their parents. Hanuman consoled them, saying, "You are two luminous flames in this great dynasty. You must look ever bright. If the ideal rule of Rama is to be continued, you have to rise far above such moods of depression. However, if you wish to have a glimpse of Rama and Sita, you are welcome to look into my heart."

Hanuman tore his chest apart. Lava and Kusha were amazed and delighted to see Rama and Sita—smiling and raising their hands to bless them—within his heart. The two young kings looked spirited again.

Vast was Rama's empire. For the sake of better administration, the young kings made two capitals, one at Manipur in the east and the other at Mathura in the west. Kusha lived at Manipur and Lava at Mathura. Years passed.

Suddenly the empire faced dangers on two fronts. On one front a ruffian named Ghorcali

you are immortal. Besides, haven't I bestowed great responsibilities on you?" said Rama affectionately.

Hanuman could not bear the scene any longer. He returned to the palace, leading Lava and Kusha with him.

Rama disappeared in the waters. So did Bharata and Shatrughna.

Thus came to end the Avatarhood of Rama.

In the Ocean of Milk Lakshmana had by then already assumed the form of Adishesha. Sita, as Lakshmi, was eagerly looking forward to the Lord's return. Soon Rama, as Vishnu, was back home. Bharata and

raised an army of bandits and began plundering the people. On another front, a demon named Kalcali who lived in an island, invaded the mainland time and again. He came in a fleet of boats with a big gang and after looting the people retreated into his island named Kalkut.

Hanuman visited the disturbed areas and united the people and told them, "You cannot protect yourselves individually. You must confront the enemy collectively. If you pray to Rama and consider yourselves Rama's soldiers, no evil power can harass you."

Inspired by Hanuman's call, the people formed themselves into two massive armies, to face the two formidable enemies. Hanuman shuttled between the two fronts and kept on encouraging the people. Because he could be seen at different places almost at the same time, he became known as *Sahasra rupanjaneya* or "Anjaneya with a thousand forms."

Ghorcali fell to Kusha's arrow. The ruffian's army was totally routed by his men who called themselves "Rama's soldiers."

Kalcali was killed by Lava.



The demon's army was crushed by his men who too called themselves "Rama's soldiers." Peace returned to the empire.

Hanuman's message to the triumphant people was: "This is Rama's land. He looked upon all as his children. You all are, therefore, brothers and sisters to Lava and Kusha. Whenever one of the citizens is in distress or difficulty, all others must come forward to help him get over the situation."

Under Hanuman's auspices two new cities were founded to commemorate the victory: Kushavati bore Kusha's name and Lavantika bore Lava's.

Hanuman was pleased with

the ability of Lava and Kusha at ruling the country. He also grew sure about their capacity to protect the people. Only then he decided upon leaving for Mount Gandhamadan.

Lava, Kusha and the nobility of Ayodhya escorted him up to the mountain. As they took leave of him, Hanuman blessed Lava and Kusha and said, "Let the dynasty of Raghu be glorified through your deeds."

To the others he said, "Never forget that you are the children of Rama. Your faith in Rama can protect you from all dangers."

He then directed them to return to Ayodhya.

"Glory to Veer Hanuman!" shouted the people as they left.

Hanuman climbed the mountain and sat in meditation. He concentrated on Rama and for-

got everything. Ages passed!

One day Hanuman opened his eyes and was intrigued to find his environment quite changed. The mountains looked like anthills; trees looked like blades of grass; elephants looked like rodents. He looked into the sky and found that the garland of stars, *Saptarshi*, had moved away from *Dhruva*.

Hanuman realised that a long time had passed while he sat in trance. Just then the sage Narada met him and informed him that the world was in the first phase of the *Dwapara Yuga*—the third one in the Cycle of Ages. Hanuman was to see Rama again in the fourth phase of the era.

After Narada took leave of him, Hanuman fell into a trance again.

Contd.





AN EXCHANGE

Madhav was a farmer. Through his labour he had been able to add to his paternal property.

He fell sick at an advanced age. When he knew that his end was near, he called both his sons, Somnath and Vijay, to his bedside and divided his lands between them.

To Vijay he said, "Consult Somnath whenever you face any problem. If you are in an acute crisis, dig a well at the south-east corner of your land."

Soon Madhav breathed his last.

Somnath, Madhav's elder son, was a capable and good-natured youth. But Vijay was an idler, a vagabond.

Came the monsoon. Somnath kept busy with his field. But Vijay's land was found lying idle. Vijay was in no mood for ploughing or sowing. He whiled away his time playing cards with his pals, or in gossips. Somnath warned him several times against his habits, but to no effect.

Soon Somnath's land smiled with teeming crop. Vijay saw it and grew jealous of his brother.

"Brother, I have begun to realise that I am a good-for-nothing fellow. However, I propose to mend my ways. In the meanwhile would you mind cultivating my idle land?" Vijay

told Somnath.

Out of pity, Somnath did the needful. But it was quite late and the crop in Vijay's field was not satisfactory.

"Brother, you have magic in your hands. You can manage with any type of land. Will you mind giving me your land and taking over mine?" Vijay asked.

Again, out of love for his younger brother, Somnath agreed to the proposal. The lands were exchanged.

Soon Somnath found out that the land which Madhav had given to Vijay was not good. He understood that their father knew Vijay's nature well and was sure that Vijay would never labour on the land. There was no point in giving him good land.

Somnath suddenly remember-

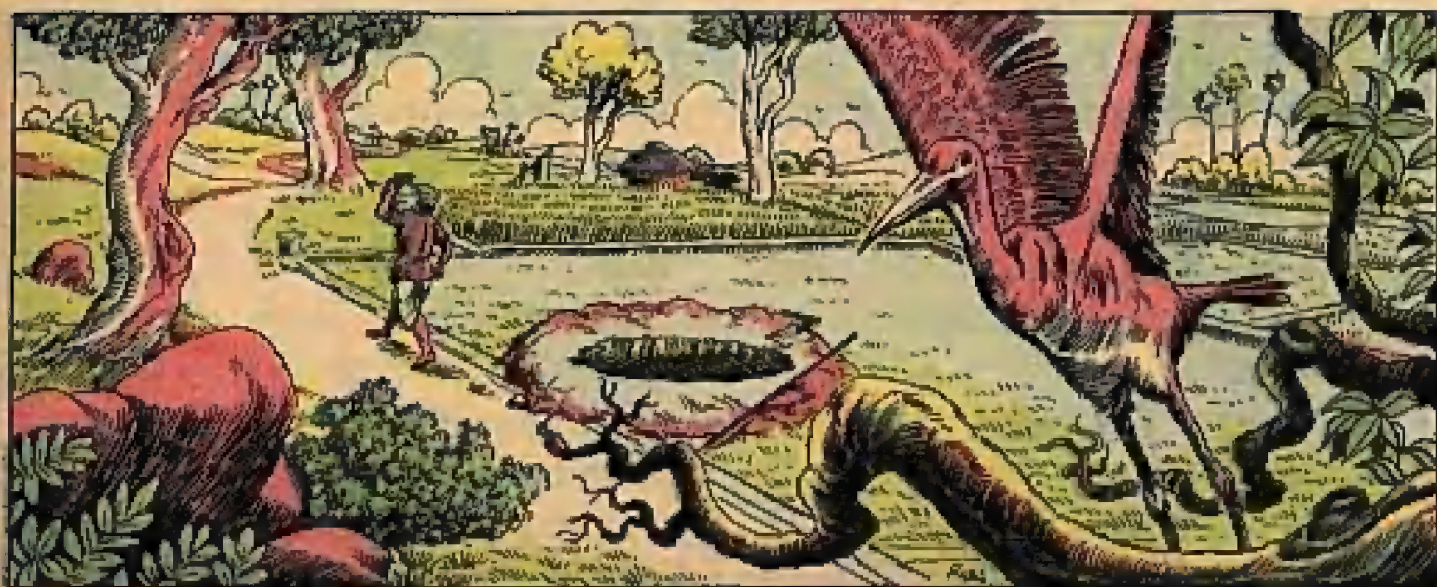
ed Madhav's advice to Vijay—that he should dig a well at the south-east corner of his land. Somnath decided to dig a well for better irrigation, at the spot pointed by his father.

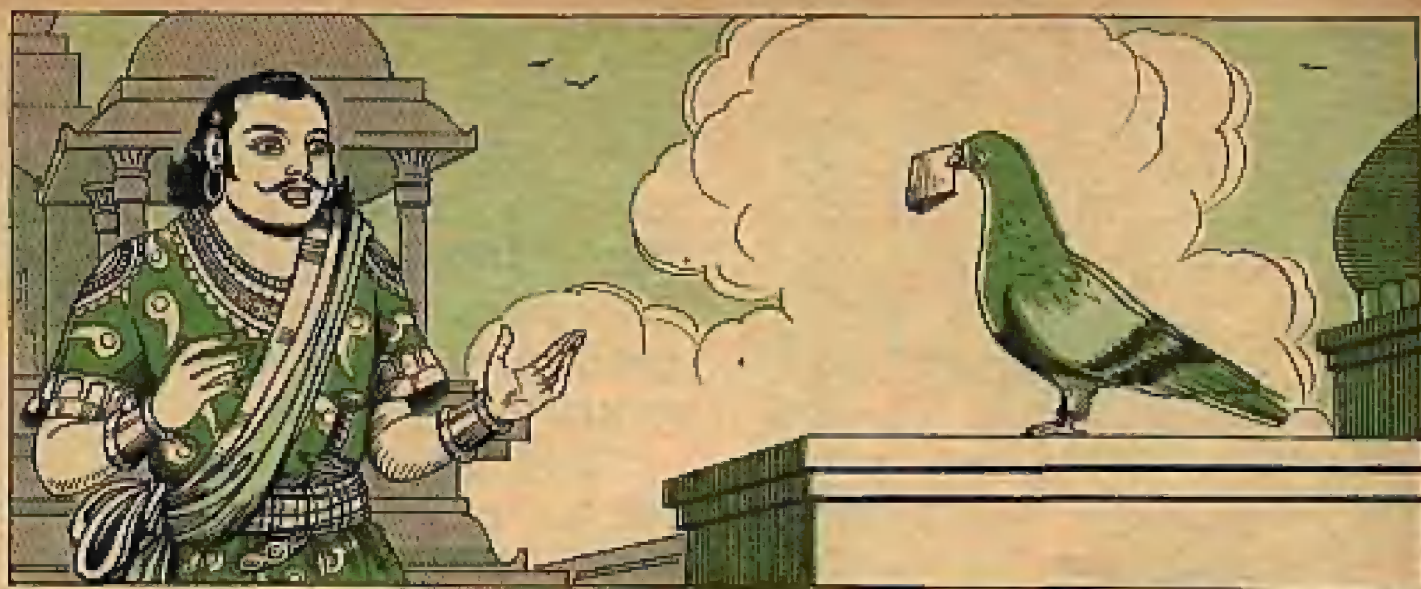
He had dug only a few feet when his spade struck a buried jar. He lifted it carefully and opened its lid. It was filled with treasure!

Somnath realised that Madhav had kept the wealth for his unworthy son, Vijay.

"Although this land is now mine, I should respect father's wish and give this to Vijay," he thought. He carried the jar home and then went out to find Vijay.

But where was Vijay? He had sold away the precious land which Somnath had transferred to him and had left the village overnight!





THE PIGEON'S MESSAGE

In days gone by, the kingdom of Shripur was ruled by King Subirsen. Shripur was a prosperous land and the king was a man of vision and wisdom. The people were happy. Unfortunately, the more prosperous Shripur became, more was the jealousy it raised in the heart of the neighbouring king, Ranvir.

Ranvir's kingdom, Merupur, was a small land. Ranvir desired to create chaos in Shripur so that he could wage a war and annex some areas of Shripur. But his plan never succeeded because King Subirsen was alert and vigilant.

Subirsen had no design on the lands of his neighbours. In

fact, he had nothing but goodwill even for Ranvir. But Ranvir was not the man to appreciate that.

Subirsen's court-pundit died suddenly and he wanted to appoint another scholar to the post. When it was known, several scholars came to the king's court, offering, their candidature. The king who was a well-read man himself, found that two scholars outshone all the rest. They were Ram Shastri and Prabhu Bhatta. He decided to examine them further. Both the scholars were lodged in the royal guest house, waiting for the king's final decision.

At sunset the king was strolling on the terrace of the palace.



A pigeon came flying to him, holding a folded piece of paper in its beak. The king took it and opened it. The message on it read, "You must appoint Ram Shastri as the court-pundit. Otherwise you shall meet with dire consequence!"

The pigeon had flown away. The king was terribly annoyed. His wrath fell on Ram Shastri. He concluded that Shastri, afraid of a possible rejection, was trying to get the post by threatening him.

The king at once ordered Shastri to be thrown into gaol.

Poor Ram Shastri had just finished bathing in the river. He was returning to the guest

house, reciting some sweet hymns. Suddenly the King's sepoy's surrounded him. He was only allowed to change his clothes before being led away.

At night the king entered the gaol, alone. Shastri sat quiet, muttering God's name.

"You must be surprised to see me, aren't you?" asked the king.

"I am surprised, but not as much as I was when I was arrested!" replied Shastri.

The king showed him the letter which the pigeon had brought and asked him who wrote it.

Shastri saw the letter and thought over the matter for some time. Then he said, "My lord, it was not unnatural for you to think that I had written this. But, surely, by now you have started thinking otherwise. I could not have written this. First of all, it is an absurd hope to get your favour through such a vague threat. Secondly, I was sure that had you examined me and Prabhu Bhatta, you would have found out that he was not a genuine scholar. You would have appointed me to the vacant post in the normal course."

"I think you are right. Maybe, somebody played a practi-

cal joke on me and I was foolish enough to fall a victim to him. I must release you forthwith," said the king.

"My lord, you need not be in a hurry to release me," said Shastri.

The king looked surprised. Shastri smiled and observed, "I am afraid, there is some conspiracy behind this letter." Then Shastri advised the king to act in a certain way.

Next day Prabhu Bhatta was informed that he had been appointed as the court-pundit. He was given a warm reception in the court and was shown a fine house. Four servants were placed at his command, among them a deaf one.

"Although deaf, he is a very good worker," Prabhu Bhatta was told.

Prabhu Bhatta felt highly flat-

tered. In the evening two men came to meet him. Prabhu Bhatta immediately sent all his servants away on different works except the deaf one.

"So, you have heard the good news, haven't you? Our plan succeeded thanks to the pigeon. Return to Merupur tonight itself and inform our king that in no time I shall gather all the defence secrets of Shripur. Thereafter it will be so easy for King Ranvir to defeat King Subirsen," Prabhu Bhatta told his visitors.

The deaf servant was none other than the chief of the king's detectives. He passed on word immediately. Within minutes Prabhu Bhatta and the two spies were arrested.

Ram Shastri was appointed not only the court-pundit but also a minister.



SHARPER THAN THE DAGGER!

One day Emperor Akbar was galloping through a village, followed by his bodyguards. He saw an old woman standing in front of a small house, a dagger in hand.

"What are you doing, granny?" asked the Emperor.

"My son! As you can see, I am poor. I am waiting for some passer-by to buy this old dagger from me," replied the woman. She added, "I believe you are the Emperor. I shall be grateful if you see this dagger."

The Emperor took the rusty dagger into his hand and then returned it to the woman.

The woman looked at the dagger and sighed.

"What is the matter?" asked the emperor.

"I had heard that you are so lucky that whatever you touch turns into gold. It is my misfortune that my rusty dagger remains what it was!" replied the woman.

"Granny! Your wit is sharper than your dagger!" said the emperor and he gave her a handful of gold mohurs.





The Gang of Three

The zamindar of Jamalpur was a good man. But he spent most of his time in reading scriptures or discussing philosophy with pundits. He hardly cared for the mundane things.

There were many to benefit from his aloofness. Among them were the three employees of the guest house he had founded.

The guest house was to be maintained from the income of the zamindar's ancestral temple. The income was substantial. The guest house, situated a mile away from the village, was to shelter pilgrims on their way to the holy town fifteen miles away. Each pilgrim was to be provided with a free meal and a free bed, if he passed his night there.

The villagers were all praise of the zamindar for his founding such an institution. They thought that this brought pride to their village. But that was all. Nobody took any interest in it, though everybody felt happy about it.

The three persons who managed the guest house were a clerk, a woman cook, and a servant.

After its opening, the guest house ran according to its founder's ideas for a month. Then the three employees began to put their ideas into it! They realised a small fee from every guest in the name of maintaining the guest house. Soon greed took hold of them and they charged the guests separa-



tely for lodging and boarding. The charitable shelter became a hotel.

But the three did it in such a way that what to speak of the zamindar, even the villagers hardly knew anything of their practice. The guest house was outside the village. And those who were made to pay were travellers. They never stopped to tell their experience to the villagers.

Days passed. The three employees of the guest house were very happy. They considered themselves lucky to be put in charge of the institution. Gradually their greed increased.

From time to time they started stealing the things of the guests. Even then no report against them reached the zamindar.

However, once a young man who was much harassed by the gang of three because he could not pay the charges fully, reported the matter, by the way, to a friend of his in the town. This friend—his name was Gopal happened to know that the guest house was meant to be charitable. He hit upon a plan to expose the corruption.

Accompanied by his friend, he reached the guest house. But he sent his friend into the village instructing him to go on telling the villagers casually, "I guess, the young man whom I saw entering the guest house is none other than the king's brother-in-law!"

At the guest house, Gopal was received by the clerk with a grin.

"Will you like a room upstairs? That will cost you a rupee for the night," informed the clerk.

"Yes, I am alone," replied Gopal, pretending to be deaf.

The clerk did not shout lest some passers-by should hear his demand.

The woman cook had already

arranged for a few other guests to sit for lunch. Gopal occupied a seat without paying any heed to the cook who forbade him to do so.

"You must pay in advance if you wish to eat," she demanded.

"You are right. I am a vegetarian," replied Gopal.

The angry cook was going to shout further when the other guests told her, "It is a sin to deprive a man of his meal when he is about to eat it. Let the deaf gentleman eat."

Gopal ate to his tummy's fill and then straightway sprawled on a bed meant for another guest.

"Get off, you fellow, or I will throw you out!" shouted the clerk, unable to restrain himself any longer.

"This bed is good enough for

me. I have no need of anything luxurious," was Gopal's reply.

Now, the clerk and the cook both screamed out, "Fellow! You must pay for your meal and the bed, or we will give you a good thrashing!"

They said this repeatedly. The zamindar who had in the meanwhile heard that the king's brother-in-law was staying in the guest house, arrived there to check the truth of the rumour. He heard every word his employees screamed out.

The moment Gopal saw the zamindar, he sprang up and greeted him and told him all that had happened.

The three corrupt employees were sacked then and there. The zamindar handed over the management of the guest house to a committee of respectable villagers.





TWO PILGRIMS

Govind and Ramdas were two neighbours who often quarrelled. But every time they repented and decided to live as friends.

In fact, both were selfish and jealous of each other. They did not realise this, although others who observed their conduct knew this.

Once they set out on a pilgrimage. Govind's wife gave him a packet of food which contained, along with breads, some ghee-baked sweetmeats. Ramdas's packet contained another variety of sweets made of cheese, along with breads.

They walked on till it was midday. They should have sat down for lunch. But thought

Govind: "Ramdas must be carrying nothing but dry breads. If I open my packet, courtesy will demand that I share my delicious ghee-baked sweets with him. Better I wait."

Unknown to Govind, Ramdas's thoughts too ran in the same direction. He was not prepared to share his cheese-sweets with Govind.

Both felt the pangs of hunger. They grew weak and walked with difficulty. Even then none raised the topic of eating!

They walked on till it was evening bearing the pains of hunger! When it was night they took shelter in a deserted temple. Even then nobody raised the question of eating.

"I shall have my food when Govind is asleep," thought Ramdas. Govind's mind too worked in the same fashion.

They fell asleep. It was dawn when Govind woke up, harassed by red ants. He observed that numerous ants came out of his food packet.

He opened the packet and exclaimed, "My foolish wife packed not only bread and sweets for me, but also some ants!"

"My wife was no wiser!" exclaimed Ramdas who too had opened his packet in the meanwhile.

But soon they realised that nobody could have packed ants for them. The ants had been attracted by the sweets. Soon they discovered that rats too had carried away their shares of the food along with chunks of the cloth in which the stuffs were tied.

They came to the conclusion that they had set out at an inauspicious moment. They returned home and took their wives to task for giving them sweets which attracted the ants.

"Very well," said their wives looking at each other. "Next time we will give you only breads."



On an auspicious day the two neighbours were out on pilgrimage again. At noon they sat down for lunch. Both had plain dry breads with them and nothing more.

"You take my breads and let me take yours," proposed Govind as a mark of friendship. Ramdas gladly agreed to the proposal.

But soon both stood up, ready to beat each other. Ramdas found Govind's bread prepared only with chilli and no salt. Govind found Ramdas's bread too salty.

Luckily a gentleman of their village who was on his way to



the town happened to reach there. He knew the nature of the two neighbours. Upon hearing the cause of their quarrel, he said, "Your wives have done this deliberately. They want you to join your breads. If a salty bread is spread on a saltless one and taken together, the taste should be fine. What

your wives want is, you two should put your minds together if you wish to be real friends. On the previous occasion you spoilt your food and missed your pilgrimage because you were false to each other."

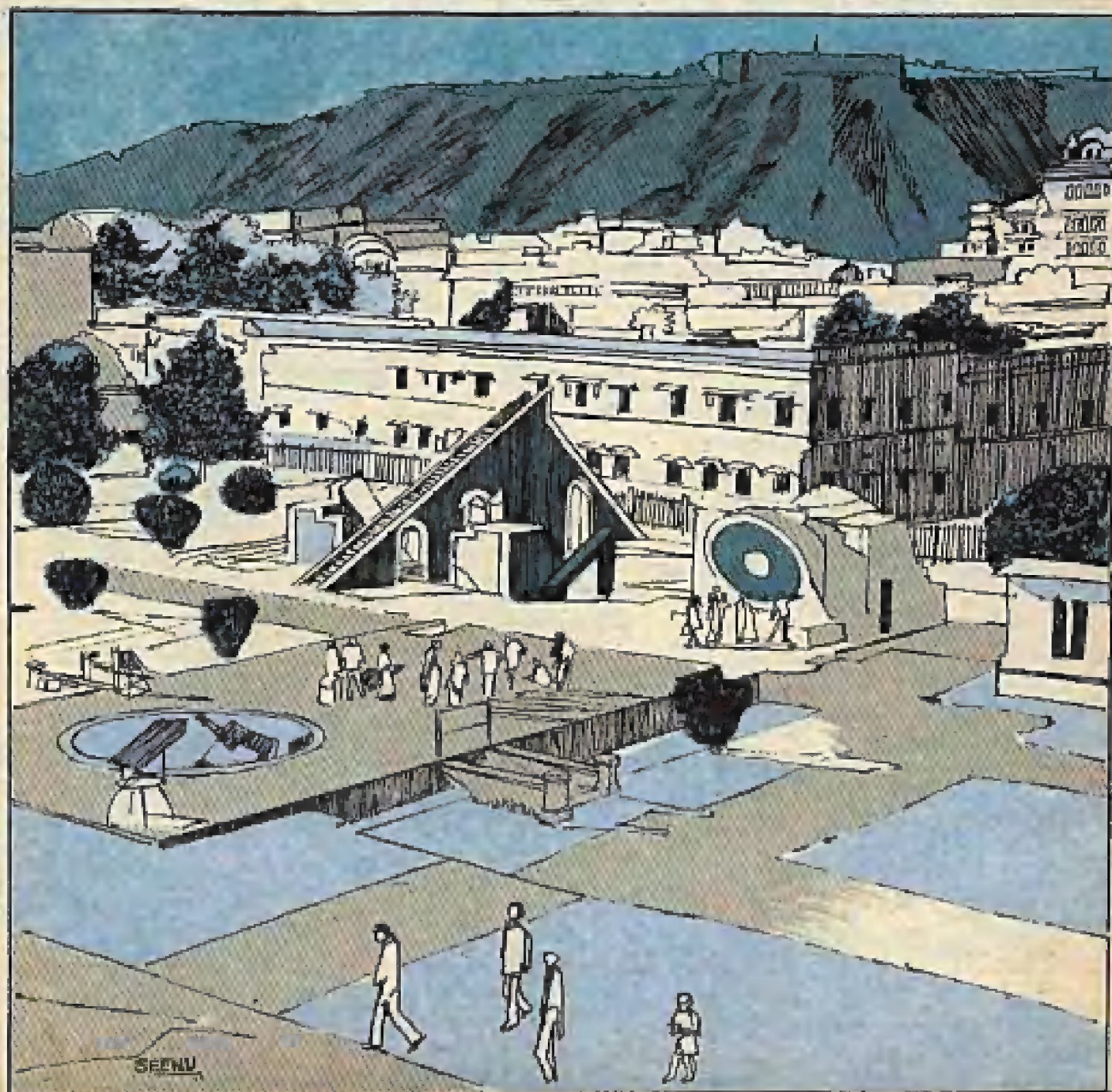
The two neighbours appreciated the lesson.

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES



THE JANTAR MANTAR OF JAIPUR

Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh (1699-1743) who founded the city of Jaipur in Rajasthan was greatly interested in science. He built five astronomical observatories in the country of which the largest one is at Jaipur. Famous as the *Jantar-Mantar* (the observatory in Delhi is also known by the same name), the huge stone instruments are fascinating from scientific as well as architectural points of view.



MASTER BABLU'S PRIVATE TRAIN!

It was raining cats and dogs. Only a few students had come to the school.

"How did you come?" the principal asked Krishnan.

"By Taxi," replied Krishnan.

"How did you come?" she asked Jack.

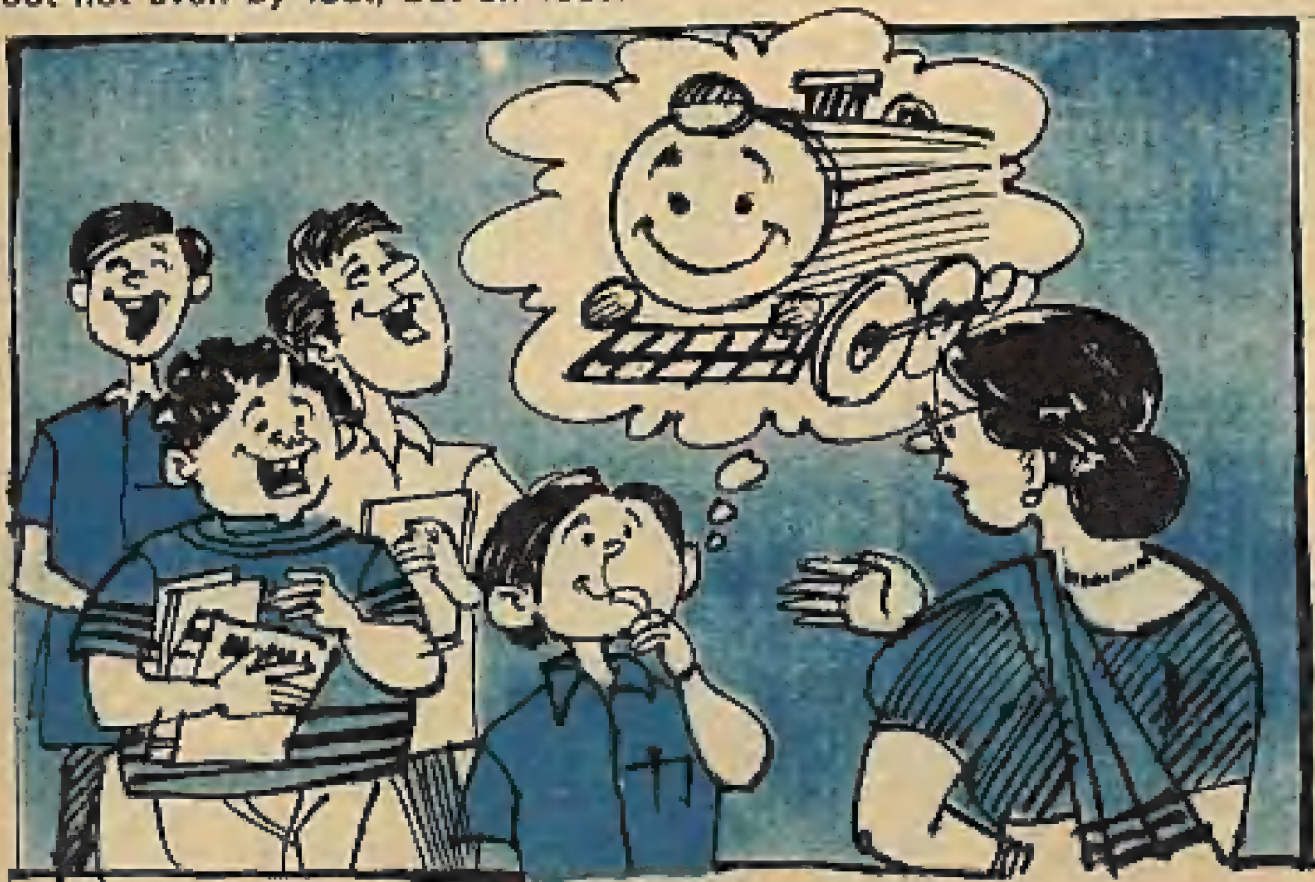
"In our car," replied Jack.

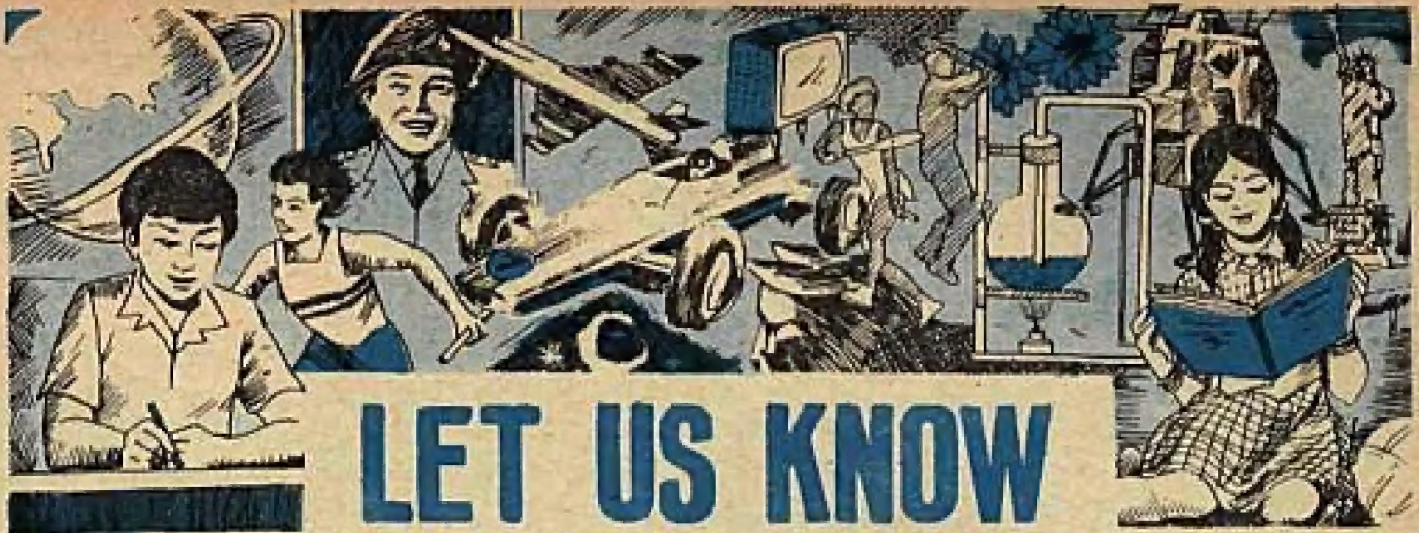
"You can give lift to some of your friends. How did you come?" she asked Bablu.

Bablu, who was never sure of his prepositions, heard Jack saying that he had come *in* car. He said, "I came *in* train!"

Someone giggled. A senior boy whispered his question to Bablu, "Do you have a private train?" And the unmindful and nervous Bablu nodded denoting 'Yes' arousing a laughter.

The principal explained: *By* is used when you give the name of the vehicle only to denote the means of transport. They came *by* taxi, or *by* train. (*A* or *the* is not used before the vehicle in such cases.) But if the vehicle referred to is a personal one, then we use *in*. He came *in* his car. However, one's feet are his own. But one does not come *in* foot not even *by* foot, but *on* foot!





LET US KNOW

Tell us about the stars.

Do stars have light of their own?

How many planets are there?

Krishna Mohan, Hyderabad

Ramani Raman, Bombay

J. Bijoy Damodaran, Rayagada.

Stars commonly mean all the heavenly bodies, especially which become visible to us at night, including the planets. Generally the sun, the moon and the earth are not covered by the term.

However, those stars which maintain a fixed position are called "Fixed stars". The planets are called "Wandering stars".

Our sun too is a star, "a gigantic atomic furnace" like the other stars. The sun looks so luminous because it is only 93,000,000 miles away from us whereas the nearest star is 25,500,000,000,000 miles away. It is hard to imagine the distance of the stars from our earth. Light, travelling at 186,000 miles per second, travels above 6,000,000,000,000 miles a year. Light from the star, Great Spiral, belonging to the Andromeda constellation, takes 1,500,000 years to reach our earth.

Yes, the stars radiate their own light, but not the planets which, like our earth, only reflect the light of the sun. The planets which revolve around the sun are Earth, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Pluto, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune.

The readers are requested to read "Legends and Parables of India" in place of the caption "Tales Behind Proverbs and Phrases" which appeared in page 11 of the September 1978 issue of the magazine. We regret the error.

— Publisher.

CHOOSE A TITLE AND WIN A REWARD

(You are invited to choose a title for the following story and write it down on a post card and mail it to 'Story-title Contest', Chandamama, 2 & 3 Arcot Road, Madras 600026, to reach us by the 20th of October. A reward of Rs. 25.00 will go to the best entry, which will be published in the December '78 issue. Please do not use the same card for entering the Photo-Caption Contest.)



Once a young man, accused of theft, was produced before Caliph Harunal Rahid. In those days a thief was punished with death.

The Caliph ordered the young man to be put to death. Someone told him that the young man was the only child of a widow.

"Even then I cannot spare his life. If I do, I will be a sinner before God," said the Caliph.

An hour later a woman came into the court and exclaimed, "I wish to meet the greatest sinner!"

All were stunned. The woman fixed her eyes on the Caliph and said "Here you are—the greatest sinner!"

"How dare you say so, woman! He is the most compassionate Caliph!" observed the Vizir.

"I know. Because of his compassion, he forgives hundreds of guilty people and sins before God. I am sure, he won't mind adding one more sin to his credit by acquitting my son!" said the woman.

The amused Caliph released the young man.

Result of Story Title Contest held in August issue

The Prize is awarded to:

Mr. G. Neelakantan

103, Vyalikaval, 'Gopal Nivas', Bangalore 560 003

Winning Entry—"FOOD FOR THOUGHT"

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



P. Sundaram



Dillip. V. Pamkar

- These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions? Could be single words, are several words, but the two captions must be related to each other.
- Rs. 25 will be awarded as prize for the best caption. Remember, your entry must reach us by 20th OCTOBER
- Winning captions will be announced in DECEMBER issue
- Write your entry on a POST CARD, specify the month, give your full name, address, age and post to :

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST
CHANDAMAMA MAGAZINE
MADRAS - 600 026

Result of Photo Caption Contest held in August issue

The Prize is awarded to:

Mr. H. Paranjoti

House E-71, S. B. I. Colony, Kakinada 533 003

Winning Entry—'Make-up Ostentation' - 'Dramatic Presentation'

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